NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH SUPPORT PROGRAMS

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
93.242, 93.281, and 93.282)

Under the authority of Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act, as amended P.L. 78-410, 42U.S.C. 241, 42 C.F.R. Part 52 "Grants for Research Projects," the National Institute of Mental Health administers the Federal Government's major program of support for research in mental health.

NIMH supports research on the epidemiology and need for services, etiology, diagnosis, typology, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses and emotional disorders and on the basic biological, behavioral, social, and environmental factors which affect mental illness and mental health.

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) supports research and research training programs to increase knowledge and improve research methods on mental and behavioral disorders; to generate information regarding basic biological and behavioral processes underlying these disorders and the maintenance of mental health; and to develop and improve mental health treatment and services. Research and research training supported by the Institute may employ theoretical, laboratory, clinical, methodological, and field studies, any of which may involve clinical, subclinical, and normal subjects and populations of all age ranges, as well as animal models appropriate to the system or disorder being investigated and to the state of the field.

DIVISION OF NEUROSCIENCE AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

The Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Science (DNBS) supports behavioral, biomedical, and neuroscience research and research training to develop and expand fundamental knowledge that can ultimately advance the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses. DNBS is composed of the following four programs:

- Behavioral, Cognitive and Social Sciences Research Branch
- Behavioral and Integrative Neuroscience Research Branch
- Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience Research Branch
- Scientific Technology and Resources

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Behavioral, Cognitive, and Social Sciences Research Branch

Research supported by this Branch concerns the cognitive, personality, emotional, and social processes that underlie normal behavioral functioning and adaptation. This includes research on factors that increase vulnerability to maladaptive outcomes, as well as those that foster protection and resiliency. Branch goals include understanding both genetic and experiential contributors to behavior; the relations among social, psychological, and biological processes; and developmental changes and continuities across the lifespan. In addition to standard experimental, correlational, and longitudinal methods with human subjects, the Branch also supports cross-cultural, behavioral-genetic, ethnographic, computational, and animal model approaches.

The Branch is comprised of four broadly defined program areas: Cognitive Science; Personality and Emotion; Interpersonal and Family Processes; and Sociocultural and Environmental Processes.

Cognitive Science

The Cognitive Science Program supports research that aims to discover fundamental principles and mechanisms of cognition. Topic areas include perception, action, attention, memory, learning, knowledge, reasoning, and

language. Methods are drawn from psychology, artificial intelligence, linguistics, philosophy, and neuroscience. Research may be conducted with humans or other animals, at any stage in the lifespan. Purely computational work is supported, but it should make substantive contact with behavioral or physiological evidence.

Personality and Emotion

The Personality and Emotion Program supports research on basic processes in emotion, personality, motivation, mood, and temperament. The development of these processes across the lifespan is of particular interest. The program also supports research on emotional, self-concept, and personality disturbances associated with normative life-cycle transitions as well as non-normative stressful conditions. Additional foci of the program are the individual differences in physiological and social motivation, attachment, temperament/personality, and emotion regulation that may relate to resilience or vulnerability to mental disorders. Studies of the roles of both physiological and experiential factors in shaping these individual differences are encouraged.

Interpersonal and Family Processes

The Interpersonal and Family Processes Program supports basic research that seeks to understand the continuum of interactive functioning, from adaptive to maladaptive, across the various phases of the lifespan. Specifically, the program focuses on processes that regulate interactive behavior in a variety of social contexts. These processes include: Genetic and biological factors; psychological mechanisms such as attitudes, persuasion, social cognition, and social comparison; and overt interactive behaviors, emotions, and interpersonal dynamics that are involved in communication, conflict, discipline and affective exchange. The types of interpersonal contexts studied include intimate and marital relationships; family, friend, and peer networks; and small group interactions occurring in school or the work place. Animal models also are of interest.

Sociocultural and Environmental Processes

The Sociocultural and Environmental Processes Program supports research on broad-scale social and environmental factors that influence mental health. This research fosters the understanding of both normal and abnormal behavior as shaped substantially by macro-level phenomena, such as social structure and culture, and by their interactions with more micro-level processes. The program is concerned with the influences of cultural, class, organizational, neighborhood, and community factors on psychosocial adaptation, including the effects of economic hardship, minority status, and acculturation. The program also considers media influences, and the psychological impact of technological and environmental change.

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Behavioral and Integrative Neuroscience Research Branch

The mission of the Behavioral and Integrative Neuroscience Research Branch (BN) is to support research on the brain mechanisms underlying cognition and behavior in functional organisms and through theoretical models, with a view to understanding how cognition/behavior develops, how it is maintained, and how it is regulated. This knowledge is crucial for improved diagnosis and treatment of all disorders of cognition and behavior including mental illness. The BN Branch is made up of four programs: Cognitive Neuroscience; Behavioral Pharmacology; Systems Neuroscience; Theoretical and Computational Neuroscience.

Cognitive Neuroscience Program

The Cognitive Neuroscience Program supports research to elucidate the neural mechanisms underlying higher mental activities including perceiving, attending, thinking, feeling, understanding, reasoning, intending, learning, communicating, and remembering. These cognitive functions of the brain can be studied through combinations of behavioral paradigms, neurophysiology, functional neuroimaging, neuroanatomy, neurochemistry, and theoretical modeling in invertebrate, vertebrate, and human subjects.

Behavioral Pharmacology Program (BN-P)

The Behavioral Pharmacology Program supports research on the behavioral effects of psychotherapeutic drugs, psychotomimetic drugs, neurotoxins, and other chemicals used as specific probes to examine neuropharmacological and neurochemical mechanisms by which various behaviors are modified, maintained or controlled. Such studies may involve drug effects on learned or conditioned behavior (such as operant, classical Pavlovian, etc.), on unlearned species-specific behavior (e.g., ethnopharmacology), as well as drug effects on memory processes. Also included are neurobehavioral studies of psychotherapeutic drug effects on the developing nervous system. Effects of psychotropic drugs on behavior in aged organisms, as well as gender differences relative to drug responses are of interest. Other foci include innovative models which can be used in designing and predicting therapeutic efficacy of psychotropic medications.

Systems Neuroscience Program (BN-S)

A major function of the brain is the production and modulation of behaviors, the integration of internal systems, and the coordination of these systems with the external environment. The Systems Neuroscience Program supports research on the neuronal mechanisms and circuits underlying the development, and regulation of behavior throughout the lifespan. Such research includes systems and comparative approaches toward understanding the anatomical, endocrinological, physiological, and neurochemical interactions between identified neurons, networks of neurons, or brain nuclei. Specific areas of interest include social and survival behaviors (as seen in field studies or laboratory situations) including aggression, communication, sexual/reproductive, parental care, play; sleep and circadian modulators; homeostasis, including the regulation of food and water intake, and body temperature; internal influences such as motivation and reward on the organization of response systems; the impact of endocrine and other neuromodulatory factors on development and regulation of behavior; and environmental influences on brain and behavior systems including stress.

Theoretical and Computational Neuroscience Program

The Theoretical and Computational Neuroscience Program supports research to develop and/or apply quantitative analytic and simulation to physiological and anatomical techniques and data to elucidate the basic mechanisms of information processing in the nervous system. The ultimate aim is to understand human information processing. The research examines a variety of neural systems--including in vitro, invertebrate, nonhuman vertebrate, and human--and may apply appropriately adapted quantitative approaches including nonlinear analysis, models based on massively parallel organizations, statistical theory, and information theory. It also supports purely theoretical approaches or analyses with clear relevance to neurobiology.

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Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience Research Branch

The Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience Research Branch supports research on the molecular and cellular basis of normal and abnormal brain function related to mental health and mental illness. Research areas supported include neurotransmitter distribution and function, neuronal signal transduction, regulation of gene expression, neural development and its regulation, relationships of the nervous system to the endocrine and immune systems, and neuropharmacology and discovery of new psychotherapeutic agents. The Branch consists of five programs: the Neurotransmission and Neuroregulation Program; the Developmental Neuroscience Program; the Neuroimmunology/Neuro-virology Program; the Neuropharmacology and Drug Discovery Program; and the Neuroscience Centers Program.

Neurotransmitter and Neuroregulation Research Program

The goal of the Neurotransmission and Neuroregulation Research Program is to elucidate the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying the role of "neurotransmitters" in neuronal communication. Topics of interest include: neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, biosynthesis, processing, storage and release of neurotransmitters, neuropeptides, and neuroregulators; molecular mechanisms of gene expression and regulation; molecular recognition by receptors; transduction of recognition signals into biological events; inactivation and metabolism. Research sponsored by the Program uses techniques of molecular and cell biology to uncover details of gene and protein structure and organizational principles of the brain's molecular architecture responsible for the neurotransmission process.

Developmental Neuroscience Research Program

The Developmental Neuroscience Research Program supports research on the role(s) of normal and abnormal patterns of neural development in determining function and dysfunction in the nervous system and the entire organism, and on the related phenomenon of neuronal plasticity. The Program elucidates the molecular and cellular phenomena and mechanisms responsible for "developmental" processes throughout the organism's life cycle. Research within its purview spans studies of developmentally expressed genes and transgenic animals; synaptic reorganization and age-induced changes in brain circuitry; hormonal and environmental influences; to behavioral function and dysfunction derived from altered developmental organization of neurons.

Neuroimmunology/Neurovirology Research Program

The primary goal of the Neuroimmunology/Neurovirology Research Program is to further understanding of the functional interconnections between the nervous and immune systems and of the role of neurotropic viruses, such as HIV, in the etiology of nervous system dysfunction underlying behavioral and mental disorders. Scientific progress is being pursued in two distinct but related fields: neuroimmunology and neurovirology. The neuroimmunology research aims at elucidating how stress, depression and other mental states affect immune system function and conversely, how an organized response to antigenic challenge alters mental states (i.e. producing sickness behavior). The neurovirology research focuses on uncovering mechanisms of cognitive and motor impairment caused by viruses.

Neuropharmacology and Drug Discovery Research Program

The Neuropharmacology section of the Program supports research on the neurobiological effects of psychotherapeutic and psychotomimetic drugs; the neurotoxic potential of these drugs, especially when administered in utero or postnatally; gender differences in drug responses; drug tolerance and interactions; and the development of new chemical entities to serve as probes of central nervous system functions. This Program encourages the development of new animal models of mental illness in which drugs can be evaluated. The

development of any in vitro or in vivo models that can be used to study the mechanisms involved in the development of refractoriness to treatment with psychotherapeutic medications is especially encouraged.

The Drug Discovery section of the Program emphasizes the design, synthesis and testing of novel chemicals and natural product extracts for potential psychotherapeutic activity and encourages a range of in vivo and in vitro studies to facilitate the discovery and development of new psychopharmacological agents for the treatment of mental disorders. Emphasis is placed on the collection, isolation, purification, and identification of therapeutic substances from natural sources (plants and animals).

A critical service is provided by this program to the drug development field through a contract which provides state-of-the-art receptor and bioassays for CNS activity. Also supported by the program are the development of novel drug delivery systems; development of animal models which may be more predictive of potential therapeutic use in human mental disorders; development of novel or improved in vivo or in vitro screening methods for psychoactive agents; development or formulation of neurotrophic factors associated with normal cognitive processes or neurodegenerative diseases; development of novel receptor ligands, especially those derived through cloned cell lines; methods for prediction or earlier determination, via biological endpoints, of therapeutic responsiveness to medication and/or biological markers for mental disorders; computer-assisted drug design, drug-receptor molecular modeling, X-ray crystallography, etc.

Neuroscience Centers Program

The Neuroscience Centers Program supports highly integrated and focused multidisciplinary research teams to increase knowledge on brain/behavior functions. This research uses state-of-the-art neuroscience and behavioral approaches to understand the brain in health and disease. Two Center mechanisms are used. The Centers for the Neuroscience of Mental Disorders component integrates basic and clinical approaches to research on schizophrenia and other severe mental illnesses, including affective disorders, anxiety and phobic disorders, sleep and circadian disorders, eating disorders, and dementias. The goal is to translate modern neuroscience research advances into basic/clinical research applications. The Centers for Neuroscience Research component supports multidisciplinary research teams to investigate novel hypotheses in basic neuroscience research related to mental health and illness. The goal is to support innovative and integrative research on a highly focussed question central to the research mission of NIMH.

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Scientific Technology and Resources

Methodological and technological innovations not only permit new approaches to be taken to old questions, but also stimulate investigation by raising new questions. Such innovations have been responsible for quantum advances in all areas of science, including the brain and behavioral sciences. Because the

breadth of brain and behavioral research extends from the molecular level to the behavioral level, the tools and approaches which have allowed progress in these areas are extremely varied: from novel ways to assess behavior, to new systems for recording neural activity, to innovative methods for identifying gene expression.

Scientific Technology and Resources comprises four Institute-wide programs which focus on technology: the Human Brain Project, the Small Business Innovation Research Program, the Small Business Technology Transfer Program, and the Small Instrumentation Program. These programs support technology research which discovers new knowledge relevant to mental health, as well as the development and transfer of tools and approaches which may be of use to the mental health research community.

Human Brain Project

The Human Brain Project supports transfer of technology from the research domains of informatics, computer science, telecommunications and related fields to the areas of neuroscience and behavioral science. This is accomplished through the support of research and research and development of novel tools and approaches to acquire, store, manipulate, analyze, integrate, synthesize, disseminate and utilize information about the brain and behavior. This program supports research and research and development in all areas relevant to the mission of NIMH.

Small Business Innovation Research

This program supports transfer of technology from the small business community to the mental health research community by supporting the research and research and development of innovative and commercially viable tools and approaches that might benefit brain and behavioral researchers. This program supports research and research and development in all areas relevant to the mission of NIMH.

Small Business Technology Transfer Program

This program supports transfer of technology from research institutions to the small business community by supporting the research and research and development of innovative and commercially viable tools and approaches that might benefit brain and behavioral researchers. This program supports research and research and development in all areas relevant to the mission of NIMH.

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DIVISION OF CLINICAL AND TREATMENT RESEARCH

In the Division of Clinical and Treatment Research, the study of mental disorders is supported by research, research training and career development in etiology, psycho-pathology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. This problem-oriented approach gives precedence to the disorders of mood, schizophrenia, personality, anxiety, and the special mental health needs of children, adolescents, and older people.

Support is provided through research, research training, and fellowship grants, program project grants, clinical research centers, and specifically announced cooperative agreements.

The support branches of the Division of Clinical and Treatment Research are:

- Child and Adolescent Disorders Research Branch
- Clinical Treatment Research Branch
- Mental Disorders of the Aging Research Branch
- Mood, Anxiety, and Personality Disorders Research Branch
- Schizophrenia Research Branch

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Child and Adolescent Disorders Research Branch

The Child and Adolescent Disorders Research Branch provides support for research in the phenomenology, etiology, genetics, diagnosis, classification, longitudinal course, outcome, and treatment (psychosocial, pharmacological, and combined) of mental disorders and clinical problems of infants, children, and adolescents through 18 years of age. The branch has programs in autism, pervasive developmental disorders, early onset psychosis, obsessive compulsive disorder, attentional and conduct disorders, affective and anxiety disorders, youth suicide, eating disorders, and the area of comorbid mental illness/mental retardation. These studies encompass developmental, biological, biochemical, neurophysiological, psychological and social factors associated with psychopathology in the individual or family.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Clinical research on the psychopathology, genetics, neurobiology, psychosocial aspects, clinical course, natural history, and etiology of disorders affecting children and adolescents, such as autism, pervasive developmental disorder, and early onset schizophrenia; affective and anxiety disorders including youth suicide; attention deficit, oppositional defiant, and conduct disorders; mental retardation with behavioral and emotional problems or associated mental disorders; eating disorders, specific developmental disorders, personality disorders, adjustment disorders, clinically significant behavioral/emotional disturbances of infancy, and emotional conditions or disorders associated with physical illness or disabilities

- Development, refinement, or evaluation of methods for assessing, classifying, and diagnosing child/adolescent mental disorders, course of illness, symptom change, response to treatment, social functioning, and/or developmental delays or difficulties in children and adolescents, including questionnaires, interviews, and biological, psychological, radiographic, electrophysiologic, or neuropsychiatric tests or measures

- Studies of pharmacologic or other somatic treatments for child and adolescent disorders or conditions, including development and refinement of specific treatments, with examination of efficacy, safety, side effects, and mechanisms of action

- Studies of psychosocial treatment methods for child and adolescent disorders or conditions, including development and refinement of specific treatments, with examination of efficacy, safety, side effects, and mechanisms of action

- Research strategies, designs, and analytic methods for assessing and understanding natural history and effects of treatment in individual patients and their families, including statistical methods for combining information from different informants, and analytic methods for longitudinal followup studies.

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Clinical Treatment Research Branch

The Clinical Treatment Research Branch provides support for a wide spectrum of research dealing with pharmacologic, biologic, and psychosocial treatment of mental disorders in adults. Of particular interest is the development and evaluation of integrated psychosocial-biologic treatments for both acute and longitudinal course of illness. The Branch supports treatment research focused on schizophrenia and schizophreniform spectrum disorders, mood, anxiety, somatoform, personality, menstrual-related, sleep, and sexual disorders, and any other specific mental disorder not assigned to another branch for therapeutic research.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Clinical evaluation of new medications, new (off label) indications for already marketed medications, and more efficacious use of medications for their current indications
- Development, evaluation, and refinement of nonpharmacologic biological treatments (e.g., ECT, light therapy, sleep manipulation, diet/nutrition therapies)
- Development, evaluation and refinement of various forms of psychosocial therapies (e.g., individual behavioral, cognitive and psychodynamic; group; family; marital; rehabilitation)
- Development, evaluation, and refinement of multi-modality treatments involving various combinations of psychosocial, pharmacologic, and nonpharmacologic biological therapies
- Clinical assessment of safety and efficacy of therapies, including acute, maintenance, observational, naturalistic, and followup studies where the emphasis is on treatment
- Studies of adverse effects related to the use of drug, biological, or psychosocial therapies, including identification, incidence and prevalence, pathophysiology, course, prevention, and treatment of adverse effects
- Studies to identify clinical, psychological, and biological predictors of treatment outcome in humans
- Studies of the mechanisms and processes whereby treatments exert their therapeutic effect
- Development of methodologies, design paradigms. outcome assessment instruments, and other techniques or procedures for evaluating clinical efficacy or adverse effects of treatment
- Assessment of the impact of therapies on quality of life and social, vocational, and family functioning, including personal and family response patterns to treatment.

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Mental Disorders of the Aging Research Branch

The Mental Disorders of the Aging Research Branch supports a broad program of basic, clinical, and applied research, research training, and career development, focusing on the nature, treatment, and prevention of major mental disorders and behavioral dysfunctions in late life. Research is encouraged in the following areas: Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; psychotic disorders and schizophrenia; mood, anxiety, and personality disorders; suicide; sleep disorders; and comorbidity of physical illness and mental disorders. Research is supported on disorders with initial onset in early adulthood that continue into late life, as well as those with onset in later life.

The substance of this research may be biological, behavioral, psychological, social, cultural, or methodological; it may include in vitro or in vivo clinical and laboratory investigations with both animals and humans, but it must have direct relevance to issues of mental disorder or mental health in older persons.

The Aging Research Branch supports research in the following program areas:

- Neurobiology and brain imaging, including studies using the approaches of the basic and clinical neurosciences, neuropathology, neurophysiology, biochemistry, molecular biology, electrophysiology, PET, MRI, and SPECT

- Neuropsychology, neuropsychiatry, and clinical psychopathology, including studies using techniques of clinical research, phenomenology, neuropsychological assessment, and health and behavior

- Treatment assessment, including studies of the efficacy and safety of pharmacotherapy, ECT, and somatic treatments such as bright light; psychotherapy including cognitive, behavioral, psychodynamic, and interpersonal approaches, and combined approaches in the development of acute, continuation, and maintenance strategies

- Psychosocial and family studies and prevention research, including studies of risk factors, social support, stress, and adaptation using biological and behavioral techniques, including psycho-neuroimmunology

- Research resources including support for clinical research centers, research training, and research career development awards.

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Mood, Anxiety, and Personality Disorders Research Branch

The Mood, Anxiety, and Personality Disorders Research Branch supports research on mood, anxiety, somatoform, and certain personality disorders. The range of research supported includes studies on the nature, etiology, diagnosis, classification, and course of the above-mentioned disorders. This branch is also responsible for treatment studies of adult eating disorders.

The substance of the research may be biological, behavioral, psychological, social, cultural, and/or methodological. The research may include in vitro and/or in vivo laboratory investigations, in conjunction with clinical investigations, if the focus of the research is on etiology or assessment of affective, anxiety, or related disorders.

The Branch is composed of five program areas: (1) clinical and psychobiological studies of mood disorders, including depression, mania, manic-depressive illness, mood disturbances, grief and depressive reactions secondary to another illness, death or stressful life events, treatment studies of adult eating disorders, and studies of suicide; (2) anxiety and somatoform disorders; (3) personality disorders; (4) genetics; and (5) neuroscience of affective disorders.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Research on the nature, description, diagnosis, classification, genetics, etiology, mechanisms, or processes, prediction, prognosis, clinical course, assessment, followup of mood, anxiety, somatoform, and personality disorders, and treatment studies of adult eating disorders

- Research using mixed human and animal models to elucidate the etiology or some clinical feature of these disorders.

- Research focused on biological parameters, including neurotransmitter systems or immunology, hormonal and neurotransmitter assays, imaging techniques, etc., in relation to behaviors, specifically associated with mood, anxiety, and related disorders.

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Schizophrenia Research Branch

The Schizophrenia Research Branch provides support for research on diagnosis, assessment, etiology, genetics, clinical course and outcome, and pathophysiology. The Branch has programs on electrophysiology and neuroimaging, biomedical factors, clinical and psychosocial factors, and genetic studies of schizophrenia. Research may involve: subjects with schizophrenia, schizophreniform illness, schizoid and schizotypal personality disorders; individuals who are deemed to be at high risk for developing any of the disorders listed above; patients with psychotic features, e.g., atypical psychosis, psychosis not otherwise classified, paranoid disorders, schizoaffective

disorder (where the intent is to examine this population in relationship to schizophrenia); and those with borderline personality disorders where the intent is to examine clinical features relative to schizophrenia.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Research on biochemical, genetic, neuroanatomical, neurodevelopmental, immune, and endocrine factors as they relate to schizophrenia and related disorders; electrophysiological studies and structural and functional neuroimaging approaches relevant to the pathophysiology, etiology, symptomatology, course, and outcome of schizophrenia spectrum disorders; and developmental factors and high-risk studies relevant to schizophrenia and related disorders

- Research on the description, classification, and measurement of psychopathological states in conditions relevant to schizophrenia; and development of methods for clinical research in schizophrenia and related disorders, including statistical assessment, psychometrics, and instruments with specific relevance to schizophrenia

- Studies in infrahuman species which relate to the basic nature, etiology, and processes specific to schizophrenia; and studies of potential causes and models of schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like syndromes

- Studies of behavioral and psychosocial factors in the etiology, course, natural history, and prognosis of schizophrenia; assessments of patterns of response which may relate to course and outcome; and assessment of levels of impairment in social and vocational functioning.

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DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AND SERVICES RESEARCH

The Division of Epidemiology and Services Research (DESR) supports programs of research, research demonstrations, research training, and resource development in prevention, services research, epidemiology, psychopathology, assessment, classification, violence and traumatic stress, and health and behavior. A closer alliance is fostered among these broad research areas as cross-cutting developmental opportunities arise among them in mental health research.

The research areas of particular interest to the Division are genetic, developmental, and other epidemiologically defined risk factors which predispose individuals to have a higher rate of illness than that of the general population; preventive interventions which are based on knowledge of risk factors and empirically demonstrated approaches; research related to improved delivery and effectiveness of mental health services to chronically ill persons who lack access to adequate systems of care, mental health services within the general medical care sector, and research on services to traditionally underserved populations and targeted groups; research on the prevention of violence with associated injuries and premature deaths, especially in minority populations, and on victims of emergencies and catastrophic events.

The branches in the Division that support research grants are:

- Basic Prevention and Behavioral Medicine Research Branch
- Epidemiology and Psychopathology Research Branch
- Prevention Research Branch
- Services Research Branch
- Violence and Traumatic Stress Research Branch

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Basic Prevention and Behavioral Medicine Research Branch

The Basic Prevention and Behavioral Medicine Research Branch supports research on the basic, behavioral, biological, genetic, and social factors and psychological processes that have an impact on physical health and the maintenance of emotional well-being. This includes a wide range of health-related studies on the biological, psychological, and psychosocial aspects of stress, immunology, sleep, circadian rhythms, nutrition, ingestive behavior, reproductive function, sexual behavior, medical illnesses, exercise, and health-related attitudes and practices. The major emphases of the branch's programs are to develop an understanding of the relationships among behavior and physical illness and emotional dysfunction and to identify ways of maximizing healthful behaviors and minimizing health-damaging behaviors.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Research to identify procedures and interventions to prevent the development of behaviors and psychological states that are likely to result in adverse health consequences, and to promote those which

contribute to good health; research that aims to establish general principles for procedures that are effective in preventing, promoting, or changing health-related behaviors and psychological states as well as methodological research fundamental to preventive interventions

- Studies of the factors and mechanisms through which individuals are put at risk for developing disorder, including research on the relationship of environmental and psychosocial factors to health-related psychological states; and identification and elucidation of links between major and minor life events/experiences and the development and course of physical and mental disorder; the study of developmental, psychosocial, and biological factors which influence risk-taking behaviors which threaten health and life; and the impact of particular sociodemographic characteristics including age, race, gender, cultural history, socioeconomic status, and geographic location on health-related behavior

- Research to develop and integrate behavioral and biomedical science, knowledge, and techniques relevant to health and illness to apply these techniques to prevention, diagnosis, intervention, and rehabilitation, with emphasis on identifying and understanding the mechanisms by which medical illnesses, the central nervous system, the endocrine system, and the immune system affect behavior. Specific interests are behavioral and biological processes associated with ingestive behavior and eating disorders, biological disorders including circadian rhythms, sleep and sleep disorders, rhythmic biological fluctuations including menstrual cycle function and its disorders, reproductive behaviors, and psychoneuroimmunology.

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Epidemiology and Psychopathology Research Branch

The Epidemiology and Psychopathology Research Branch (EPRB) provides support for research in the epidemiology of mental disorders in population- and clinic-based samples, including estimation of incidence and prevalence rates, the natural history of disorders, and risk factors for disorder such as genetic, psychosocial, biologic, environmental, and demographic characteristics. The branch supports the development of standardized and structured methodology for the assessment and classification of psychopathology in children and adults, and the development of statistical software applicable to the study of psychiatric disorders. The branch also supports clinical and epidemiologic studies on the classification, assessment, etiology, genetics, clinical course, outcome, and treatment of general psychopathology and other mental disorders.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Studies to assess the mental disorders in the community including incidence, prevalence, morbidity, natural history, and mortality and to identify syndromes of mental disorders through determination of the distribution and association of clinical phenomena in specified populations

- Studies of clinic or community populations defined by the presence or absence of a particular premorbid characteristic or other risk factor, or by first onset of a particular disorder

- Research on the identification and assessment of risk factors influencing the development and course of mental disorders, including genetic, biochemical, nutritional, physiological, behavioral, demographic, personality, family stress, or other factors that predate the onset of a disorder; and observational or experimental projects to test hypotheses relating specific etiologic factors to mental disorders

- Research to develop and refine epidemiologic methods, instruments, and classification schemes directly related to studies of incidence and prevalence of mental disorders in patient and community populations, and related to biological, psychological, and social risk factors for those disorders

- Research concerning the nature, description, diagnosis, classification, etiology, treatment, course, prognosis, or outcome of certain specific mental disorders not assigned to another branch.

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Prevention Research Branch

The Prevention Research Branch provides support for research on (1) the prevention of mental disorders and related behavioral dysfunctions and (2) the promotion of mental health. Priority is given to intervention strategies based on a public health
perspective which avoid or interrupt the development of dysfunctional conditions and/or improve individual adaptive capabilities in at-risk populations. The branch also supports research aimed at reducing risk for onset of mental disorders, and methodological studies especially relevant to preventive intervention research. Of particular interest are studies concerned with the prevention of socioemotional problems and disorders among infants and young children, conduct disorder and related disruptive behavior problems in school-age children, anxiety and depression in all ages, suicidal behavior, and the enhancement of protective factors such as coping mechanisms. Interventions may be universal, selective, or indicated and may be implemented in workplace, family, community, education, or service settings.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Preventive trials to test the efficacy, duration, limitation, and the safety of biological, psychosocial, or ecological interventions designed to reduce the incidence of mental or emotional disorders and dysfunctions within nonclinical and preclinical populations

- Promotive trials to test the efficacy, duration, and limitations of interventions designed to enhance mental health through improved coping skills or other protective factors

- Theory-based preventive/promotive trials that test and refine presumed causal factors that underlie the development of psychopathology

- Research to test rigorously the effectiveness of interventions through controlled, population-based trials in real-world settings such as schools

- Studies which demonstrate and validate new methods for dealing with design, subject selection, analysis, and measurement problems common to the assessment of short- and long-term preventive/promotive interventions

- Studies of cost effectiveness, cost offset, or cost benefit of preventive/promotive interventions

- Replications of effective preventive/promotive interventions and generalizations to other settings and populations

- Identification and testing of factors that mediate and moderate the effects of interventions, e.g., developmental stage, gender, cultural status, or expectancy effects.

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Services Research Branch

The Services Research Branch supports research on mental health services delivery and mental health economics at the clinical, systems, and community levels in specialty mental health and general health settings. Major program emphases include:
services for severely mentally ill persons, economic issues in mental health services delivery, mental health services within the general medical care sector, services for those with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders, services for children and adolescents, services for the elderly, services for minorities, services for women, services for homeless mentally ill persons, services for those in rural areas, services for those with mental illness and HIV infection, research
methods, and collaboration between academic and research centers or institutes and public mental health agencies.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Research that examines the availability, quality of care, use, cost, structure, and impact of mental health and related services, programs, organizations, and systems; assessment of factors influencing the supply and use of facilities and services; assessment of the need for and access to services; help-seeking behavior; effects of changes in different parts of the health care delivery system, e.g., growth of private hospitals, corporate hospitals, nursing homes, health maintenance organizations, and preferred provider organizations; impact of legislation and regulations on the provision of mental health services; applications of information systems and other changing technologies to mental health service systems; and application of research results to managing and improving mental health services programs

- Research that focuses on the role of economic factors in mental health services, benefit coverage for such services, assessment of the costs of services, and studies of the impacts of various financing mechanisms on the use and quality of care provided

- Research that examines the clinical management of patients with mental disorders, as typically conducted within particular types of treatment settings (e.g., general medical outpatient, specialty outpatient, general hospital inpatient), or on a comparative basis across settings, including prevalence surveys of particular forms of practice, assessments of diagnostic accuracy and treatment effectiveness, and controlled experiments on innovative forms of services designed to improve diagnosis, treatment, or referral practice

- Research that examines the provision of mental health services within the general medical care sector and in general hospital and nursing home settings, including research on the relationship between the primary medical care and specialty mental health sectors; adequacy, recognition, diagnosis, and management of mental and emotional problems by primary care providers; and the coordination of care and referrals to mental health specialists.

- Research that examines issues of mental health care at the interface of the legal and mental health systems, including the organization, costs, financing, accessibility, effectiveness, appropriateness, and outcomes of services for children and youth with emotional disorders in the juvenile justice system (e.g., police, jails, courts, prisons, probation and parole, conditional release); and mentally disordered persons involved with or at risk of becoming involved with the civil law (e.g., commitment, voluntary and involuntary hospitalization, determinations of "dangerousness" and incompetency).

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Violence and Traumatic Stress Research Branch

The Violence and Traumatic Stress Research Branch supports research on perpetrators of aggressive and violent behavior, victims of interpersonal violence, and victims of emergencies and catastrophic events. The scope of the program encompasses the behavioral, psychosocial, and biological sciences.

Support is provided in the following areas:

- Studies of the prevalence, course, correlates, treatment, prevention, and management of aggressive and violent behaviors in children, youth, and adults, including identification of protective factors that help insulate children and adults from the risk of violent behavior; studies of violent behavior in the mentally ill

- Studies of the prevalence, etiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of the psychological consequences [e.g., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)] of exposure to interpersonal violence, including rape and sexual assault, family violence (child physical and sexual abuse, spouse abuse), anti-gay and -lesbian violence, and criminal homicide

- Studies of the etiology, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of the psychological consequences (e.g., PTSD) of exposure to emergency and catastrophic events, including disaster (e.g., hurricanes, floods), combat, community violence (e.g., mass murder), accidents, and forced relocation

Contact person

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OFFICE ON AIDS

The Office on AIDS Programs supports research and research training to better understand, assess, and treat the neuropsychiatric, behavioral, and psychosocial aspects of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection and AIDS. In the neurosciences, the general program areas include elucidating how HIV infection produces specific neuropsychiatric syndromes, the natural history of such syndromes, their impact on cognitive function and performance, and the development of treatments for HIV central nervous system (CNS) disease. In the behavioral and psychosocial arena, the general program areas include identification of determinants of maintaining low-risk behaviors, especially for hard-to-reach and special populations; the social contexts in which risk-taking behaviors occur; the impact of HIV and AIDS on the person, caregivers, families, and significant others; and the development of more accurate methods to assess and treat HIV-related mental disorders and to improve delivery and access to mental health services to persons affected by HIV.

The Office on AIDS supports the following areas of research:

- Research on the design, testing, and evaluation of theory-driven behavioral interventions designed to prevent and reduce high-risk behaviors for HIV infection and maintain low-risk behaviors in children, adolescents, and adults; research on interventions targeted to populations for which current research data are not available; investigator- initiated, multi-site projects designed to test interventions across different populations and geographic locations

- Research on the interrelationships of AIDS and Tuberculosis, with special reference to issues of adherence and compliance to medical regimens

- Research on the behavioral issues in HIV/AIDS Clinical and Vaccine Trials, including recruitment, counseling interventions, informed consent, adherence, and assessment of risk behavior

- Research on diffusion and implementation of AIDS prevention programs, including research on promoting help-seeking behaviors such as counseling, social support, and early intervention services; the role of the community in preventive interventions; adherence to medical treatment, elucidating the determinants of help-seeking behavior among different populations

- Research on the psychological and psychosocial impact of HIV and AIDS upon individuals, families and communities,including studies on coping, stress, bereavement, caregiving, survival guilt, and improving mental health service delivery

- Research into the effects of HIV on the central nervous system (CNS), including studies of CNS HIV infection and the brain's influence on immune function; effect of HIV infection on brain-immune interactions

- Research into the brain, immune system, and neurological aspects of HIV infection, including studies of the effects of pharmacologic treatment for AIDS-related depression, anxiety, and cognitive impairment; longitudinal studies of the neuropsychological development of children with HIV infection of the CNS; studies of animal models to determine the neuropathological alterations in the nervous system during both asymptomatic and symptomatic phases of the infection; studies to develop more suitable, economical, and readily available animal models which closely mimic HIV encephalopathy and apply them to the study of the pathogenesis, neurological, psychiatric, and neurobehavioral evaluation, treatment, and prevention of CNS HIV infection.

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OFFICE FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The NIMH Associate Director for Special Populations administers research training programs for racial/ethnic minorities underrepresented in biomedical and behavioral research and research development awards for institutions with substantial enrollments of racial/ethnic minority students. The programs include the Career Opportunities in Research Education and Training (COR) Honors Undergraduate program; the Minority Research Infrastructure Support Program (M-RISP); and the Supplements for Underrepresented Minorities in Biomedical and Biobehavioral Research. A program to promote reentry into Behavioral and Biomedical Research Careers is also administered by this office. The COR Honors Undergraduate Program is intended to assist institutions with substantial enrollment of racial/ethnic minority students in the training of greater numbers of scientists and teachers in disciplines related to research in mental health fields. The objectives of the program are (1) to increase the number of well-prepared racial/ethnic minority students who can compete successfully for entry into graduate programs leading to the doctoral degree; (2) to aid in the development of a strong behavioral and/or biological sciences curriculum; and (3) to strengthen research training programs in the behavioral and/or biomedical sciences.

The M-RISP program provides grants to institutions with a substantial enrollment of racial/ethnic minority students for support of research projects, enhancement of existing research infrastructure, and for advanced training of faculty. These grants also provide support for graduate and undergraduate students to serve as research assistants on M-RISP research projects. Appointments of research assistants are made by the principal investigator on the M-RISP grants.

The Supplements for Underrepresented Minorities in Biomedical and Behavioral Research are administrative supplements to existing research grants for research and salary support for high school students, undergraduate students, graduate research assistants, and junior faculty-level investigators. The proposed research experience must be an integral part of the ongoing research of the parent grant supported by NIMH. The purpose of the supplemental awards is to enhance the research capability of the minority student or faculty member, and to provide opportunities for minority individuals to develop as independent, competitive research investigators.

Supplements to Promote Reentry Into Biomedical and Biobehavioral Research Careers: This program offers administrative supplements to currently funded NIMH research grants to support individuals with high potential to reenter an active research career after taking time off to care for children or parents or to attend to other family responsibilities. Candidates must be fully trained researchers who wish to bring their research skills up to date.

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OFFICE OF RURAL MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

The Office of Rural Mental Health Research (ORMHR) was established to provide a focal point for NIMH's programs involving research on mental health problems of persons living in rural areas of the United States. The activities of ORMHR include: planning and support for workshops and conferences dealing with rural research issues; coordination with Federal and non-Federal organizations that have rural research interests; collection, analyses, and dissemination of data; technical support of research efforts to improve health conditions in rural areas, and appropriate distribution of research findings.

In its program of research to understand and improve the mental health of rural Americans, the ORMHR focuses upon (but is not limited to) the following research issues:

- etiology of mental health problems, including
- individual characteristics, the family and community
- met and unmet need for mental health services
- access and barriers to mental health services
- use of mental health services, including primary care providers for mental health problems
- quality of care for mental health problems
- outcomes of care for mental health problems
- cost of mental health services
- effectiveness of innovative mental health systems, services and new technologies
- prevention of mental health problems
- mental health problems of special populations, including children and adolescents, senior citizens, minorities, women, and persons with HIV/AIDS

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RESEARCH SUPPORT MECHANISMS

The array of research support mechanisms used by NIMH includes: Research Project Grants (R01); Small Grants (RO3); Dissertation Research Grants (RO3); Program Project Grants (P01); First Independent Research Support and Transition (FIRST) Awards (R29); Center Grants (P20, P30, P50); Career Development Awards (K series); Small Grants (R03); Behavioral Science Track Award for Rapid Transition (B/START), Academic Research Enhancement Awards (AREA, R15) and Conference Grants (R13). Mechanisms for funding research training include: Institutional Awards (Training Grants) (T32); Individual Fellowship Awards - Predoctoral (F30, F31) and Postdoctoral (F32). NIMH also provides support for the NIMH Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Grants (R43 and R44), Small Business Technology Transfer Grants (R41 and R42), and Contracts.

Note: Because the programs have diverse requirements, applicants are urged to contact program staff to obtain specific guidelines regarding their research interests.

Most investigator-initiated research is supported by regular research grants or small grants. Research grants are awarded to institutions on behalf of principal investigators who have designed and will direct a specific project or set of projects. Research scientist development awards are made in order to develop and stabilize the careers of talented research scientists and to help ensure continued productivity of exceptional scientists. Grants can be renewed at intervals or supplemented (with the exception of small grants which are for 1 or 2 years only and cannot be supplemented) through the formal submission and review process described below; investigator(s) may apply for a renewal (competing continuation) of the project by submitting an application for further support, including a report of progress and including specific plans for future work. Small grants, which are limited to 1 or 2 years and $50,000 per year, are usually awarded for pilot research or exploratory studies in areas new to the investigator and/or for impetus to investigators who are beginning research careers.

The First Independent Research Support and Transition (FIRST) award provides a sufficient initial period of research for newly independent behavioral, psychosocial, and biomedical investigators to develop their research capabilities and demonstrate the merit of their research ideas in the mental health field and mental illness disciplines. FIRST applications must request 5 years support and are limited to U.S. institutions.

Special Initiatives

From time to time, announcements of availability of research grants awards or cooperative agreements for collaborative research in special areas are issued by the Director, NIMH. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Guide to Grants and Contracts publishes on a regular basis notices of the availability of new program announcements and requests for applications (RFAs).

Copies of all NIMH announcements, guidelines for special mechanisms, as well as a list of ongoing extramural program announcements, are available from the NIMH Gopher (gopher.nimh.nih.gov), or by FAX from the NIMH FAX4U (301) 443-5158, or by mail from the Division of Extramural Activities, NIMH, Room 9C-04, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20857, telephone: (301) 443-4673.

Contracts

Research and development (R&D) contracts are used to support clearly identified circumscribed activities with requirements specified by NIMH. Contracts may be used to acquire new or fuller knowledge of a subject and/or to apply such knowledge and understanding to develop or create materials, systems, or methods of direct benefit or use to the Government.

At times, NIMH publishes in the Commerce Business Daily requests for proposals (RFP) for specific project contract projects. Individuals or organizations may compete for proposed contract awards by responding to these announcements. (The Commerce Business Daily is a list of U.S. Government procurement invitations, contract awards, subcontracting leads, sales of surplus property, and foreign business opportunities. It is published by the Commerce Department and is available by subscription.)

APPLICATION AND REVIEW

Applications are submitted on behalf of an investigator by a sponsor institution.

Eligible Institutions. NIMH research grants are available to any public, nonprofit, or for-profit institution such as a university, college, hospital, or community agency, units of State or local government, and authorized units of the Federal Government. In general, foreign institution are eligible only for regular research project grants (R01).

Staff Consultation. Potential applicants are encouraged to seek information and consultation from Institute staff. Names of key program staff and their telephone/FAX numbers are included above in each Division/Branch description.

Applications. State and local government agencies should use form PHS 5161. All other applicants should use form PHS 398 (rev. 5/95) for research, training and career development grant applications and form PHS 416 for fellowship applications. Form 398 contains extensive guidance regarding application preparation. Prospective applicants are urged to read the instructions carefully. Application kits are available in university grants offices or from the Office of Grants Information, Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 3034 - MSC 7762, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-7762, Email: GIRG@DRGPO.DRG.NIH.GOV, Telephone: (301) 435-0714.

Applicants responding to specific announcements should insert the number and title of the announcement in Line 2 on the first page of the application. Investigator-initiated applications are welcome. If the mental health relevance of a proposed project is not apparent, the applicant should state the mental health problems to which the proposal pertains. Applications not falling within the Institute's stated areas of interest and/or not relevant to mental health or illness will be referred elsewhere or returned to the applicant.

Other components of the Public Health Service share interest in several of the research areas described above. Applications are considered for acceptance and assigned according to standing referral guidelines. Referencing this announcement does not guarantee assignment to NIMH.

Applications must adhere to the page limitations noted in the application kit. Complete instructions for applicants are included in the kits. The signed original and five (5) copies (2 copies if form PHS 5161 is used) of the application should be sent directly to the Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health, 6701 Rockledge Drive, Room 1040- MSC 7710, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-7710 (20817 for courier/overnight mail service).

NIMH is interested in applications from all well-qualified individuals; women and minority individuals in particular are urged to apply. Also, women and minorities must be appropriately considered for inclusion in the study populations for research into the etiology of diseases, research in behavioral and social sciences, clinical studies of treatment and treatment outcomes, and research on the dynamics of health care, on appropriate interventions for disease, and on disease prevention and health promotion.

Grant Review Procedures. Research grant applications are reviewed for scientific and technical merit by an initial review group (IRG) convened by NIMH and composed primarily of non-Federal scientists. A second level of review is provided by the National Advisory Mental Health Council. By law, only projects recommended for award

by Council may be considered for funding. Summaries of IRG recommendations are sent to applicants as soon as they are available. Information on the NIH Peer Review Appeals System is available from the Office for Special Populations, Room 17C-16, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20857, (301) 443-2847.

The NIMH research support program is not subject to the intergovernmental review requirements of Executive Order 12372 as implemented through HHS regulations at 45 CFR Part 100. Small grants and small business innovation research grants, Phase I, are reviewed at the IRG level only.

Review Criteria. Review criteria are different for the diverse programs. Usually, in the review of research grant applications, IRGs consider the significance and creativity of the research goals; the scientific merit and validity of the specific research plan; the potential contribution to mental health/public health knowledge; the feasibility of the research; the competence and dedication to the project of the principal investigator and his or her supporting staff; the adequacy of available facilities; the potential usefulness, generalizability, or heuristic value of the results; provisions for the protection of human and animal subjects; and the appropriateness of the proposed budget for the work. Specialized programs may include specific criteria which are published in the RFA.

Receipt and Review Schedule. Unless otherwise specified, NIMH research grant applications are accepted and reviewed according to the following regular schedule:

Receipt of Applications	Initial Review	Advisory Council Review	Earliest Award Date
Feb.1/Mar.1*	June	Sept./Oct	December 1 June 1/July 1*
Oct./Nov.	Jan./Feb.	April 1	
Oct. 1/Nov. 1*	Feb./March	May/June	July 1

*Amended applications and competing continuation applications are to be submitted on the latter dates, with the exception of center applications. All center applications are to be submitted on the earlier dates.

Applications arriving after the above receipt dates are subject to assignment to the next review cycle or may be returned to applicant.

AIDS Expedited Application Receipt and Review Schedule

The special AIDS receipt, review, and award cycle for all unsolicited new and competing renewal AIDS grant applications is as follows:

Receipt of Applications	Initial Review	Council Review	Earliest Award Date
Jan. 2	Feb./March	May/June	June
May 1	June/July	Sept./Oct.	Nov.
Sept. 1	Oct./Nov.	Jan./Feb.	Feb.

AIDS applications received after the above dates will be held until the next AIDS special review cycle.

Award Criteria. Factors considered in determining which research grant applications will be funded include IRG and Council outcomes, significance of the topic under study to NIMH priorities as announced in this or other special announcements or guidelines, program balance, public health significance, and availability of funds.

Period of Support. Applicants (except those submitting small grant applications) may request support for up to 5 years. A competing continuation (renewal) application may be submitted near the end of an approved period of support to continue a project. A competing supplemental application may be submitted during an approved period of support to expand the scope or protocol of a project during the approved period of the present grant. Special periods of support may be specified for mechanisms other than regular research grants.

Terms and Conditions of Support. Grants funds may be used for expenses clearly related to research projects and necessary to carry out the project. Such expenses may include both direct costs which can be specifically associated with the project and the allocable portion of allowable indirect costs of the
institution.

Grants must be administered in accordance with the Public Health Service Grants Policy Statement (DHHS Publication No.(OASH) 82-50-000 GPO O017-020-0090-1 (rev. 4/94).

Availability of Funds. Availability of funds is determined by annual congressional appropriation.